# 1 Interview Summaries

## *1.1 Greater Portland Council of Governments - GPCOG*

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| Interview Type | Personal, Council of Government |
| Interview Location | GPCOG Office, Portland |
| Interview Date | October 19, 2001 |
| Summary Date | November 5, 2001 |
| Interviewer | CDM / Michelle Thaler (thalerma@cdm.com) |
| Interviewed: | *Kristen Sommer, GIS Manager (ksommer@gpcog.eddmaine.org)<br>233 Oxford Street<br>Portland, ME<br>207-774-9891<br>Neal W. Allen, Executive Director (nallen@gpcog.eddmaine.org)<br>Rick Seeley, Landuse Planner (rseeley@gpcog.eddmaine.org)<br>Rosemary Mosher, ArcIMS project |
| Staff Size (approx) | 20 total, 3 with GIS responsibilities including a GIS manager. |
| Budget (approx) | Combined GIS staff salaries range from $105,000 – $142,000, this does not include hardware and software. Projects are undertaken on a fee for service basis. |
| URL: | http://www.gpcog.org/ |

### 1.1.1 Agency Overview

GPCOG is a voluntary municipal service organization founded in 1969. GPCOG offers planning and other municipal services to its 24 municipal and 3 public, non-profit organization members.

### 1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

#### 1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

GPCOG uses GIS technology to provide services to its members. These services include mapping, including GIS data layer creation, data storage and maintenance planning services.

GPCOG currently uses GIS for:

- Parcel data creation for member towns
- Zoning and Shoreline Zoning layer creation including community specific attribute fields
- Planning projects
- GPS of road centerlines
- Historic district layer creation
- Stream protection analysis

#### 1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

The GPCOG currently maintains:

- ESRI ArcView 3.2: (3) seats
- 1 ArcView Network extension

- 1 PC ArcInfo 3.2.5
- 1 ArcInfo 8.1
- 1COGO
- 1 ArcIMS
- GPCOG Hardware includes:
    - 1 HP 750C plotter used for producing maps internally as well as for members
    - 1 Dell Poweredge 2400 server 1gb RAM as IMS web server
    - 2 PCs (333, 350 mhz, 8-10gb storage) for desktop analysis
    - 1 Micron DX5000 1ghz processor with 256mb RAM and 40gb storage for desktop analysis

### 1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

#### 1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

**Existing data sets include:**

**Basemap features:** E911 roads

**Analysis layers, including:**

- Aerial photos from 1976 through 2001 ranging in scale from 1" = 2000' to 1" = 200'
- Currently under contract with CITIPIX to fly Cumberland County and Bath and West Bath with a photonegative scale of 1:10,800– all photos will be scanned and the center of the photo will be georeferenced.
- Parcel maps for member communities (13 towns have data) in State Plane Feet NAD83
- Zoning data layers which are community specific with community specific attribute fields.

**Currently unavailable but desired data sets include:**
Public safety data layers
Landuse
Public Facilities locations
Updated parcel data layers with town assessing data linked
Public Works data including utility location
All Maine Fish and Wildlife data sets
Growth areas
Rural areas
Permit application procedures (could be used as an incentive to towns to create and maintain GIS data as well as save time in applying for state permits)

#### 1.1.2.3.2 Attribute Data

Zoning data from towns. GPCOG notes that each municipality has slightly different attributes for zoning.

Assessing data from towns. Data is different for each town and is stored using different assessing systems. Data is not necessarily digital.

#### 1.1.2.3.3 Data Issues

GPCOG is concerned about the municipal commitment to maintain data. GPCOG would like to see some sort of state investment to help communities maintain their data. This could be in the form of a standard database design, providing incentives to create and use GIS data for permitting, providing funding for interface development to assist communities in accessing data and development of data standards.

Access to data is another concern. Many of GPCOG's members have limited Internet access. They also have hardware limitations that make using GIS data time consuming and frustrating.

The coordinate system is also a data issue. MEGIS maintains data in UTM NAD83 meters; most of GPCOG's data layers for communities are in StatePlane NAD83 feet. This is a problem when towns want to overlay their data layers created by GPCOG and the state data layers maintained by MEGIS.

### 1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

Currently, GPCOG is developing an ArcIMS interface to allow members to more easily use the GIS data that GPCOG stores.

**Planned future GIS activity and applications:**

- Casco Bay Estuary Project - underway
- Want to do a pilot project to track growth areas and rural areas
- Shoreline zoning map

## 1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

GPCOG is concerned that towns do not have sufficient hardware to store and edit their GIS data sets.

## 1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

GPCOG sees a benefit of a long-term commitment by the state to update and maintain data. If communities could see GIS as a means to speed up a process with the state (for example, submitting data in GIS format would help expedite the permit process) then communities would more likely use GIS and see GIS as a tool and not just as a burden. Additionally, the state could assist towns in acquiring hardware and software at lower cost by negotiating contracts with hardware and software vendors.

GPCOG notes that desktop GIS software packages can be difficult to learn and use if not applied on a regular basis. Web-based GIS technologies would provide a greater benefit to communities who have occasional need for GIS data or specific analysis needs. This would ease the training burden on town staff.